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ABSTRACT

Outcomes of a staff development program based on the whole language philosophy that was implemented in a rural Florida elementary school are presented in this practicum report. Two surveys of 29 and 35 faculty, respectively, indicated needs for faculty cohesiveness, a unified purpose, and an update of language arts teaching skills. A staff development program based on the whole language philosophy and a combination of the development/improvement and training models was then implemented. Voluntary participation in weekly meetings provided teachers with information on whole language strategies and access to research material. Pre- and post-tests comprised of a survey and the Theoretical Orientation Reading Profile (TORP) measured gains in teacher agreement with whole language philosophy and reliance on peer discussion/sharing. Outcomes included a change in language arts philosophy, improved group unity, and increased willingness to utilize the method in the future. Five tables are included. Appendices include the historical and topic surveys, the TORP profile, the pre/post survey, copyright permission, and a whole language reading list. (14 references) (LMI)

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THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by

Betina S. Hurst

A Practicum Report

Submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of Education, Nova University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.

The abstract of this report may be placed in a National Database System for reference.

June 1991

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Abstract

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The author noted some needs of a traditionally stable faculty which had recently experienced a one-third turnover rate. These needs were verified by studying the historical data and interest surveys of the group. The faculty needed a feeling of cohesiveness, a unified purpose and an update of language arts teaching skills. A staff development program on the whole language philosophy was indicated as a possible solution.

After reviewing five potential staff development models, a combination of the development/improvement model and the training model seemed most suited to this situation. This project involved voluntary participation in weekly meetings which provided new information on whole language strategies, access to research material and sharing/discussion sessions. Teachers were encouraged to test out newly learned techniques and pursue outside readings. Gains in agreement with whole language philosophy and reliance on peer discussion/sharing were measured by pre- and posttests. These measures were a short answer survey and the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP), devised by Deford (1985).

This type of staff development program was found to be successful in this situation when positive results were found on both indicators. Appendices include the historical survey, topic survey, pre/post survey, Theoretical Orientation to Reading Survey, copyright permission, and a list of readings on the topic of whole language.

Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. When it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other professionals in the field and in the hope that my own work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

Signed: Betina J. Hurst
Student's name

Table of Contents

	Page
Title Page	1
Abstract	ii
Authorship Statement	iii
Observer's Verification	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Tables	vi
Chapters	
I. Purpose	1
II. Research and Solution Strategy	10
III. Method	23
IV. Results	33
V. Recommendations	40
Reference List	44
Appendices	
Appendix A. Historical Survey	46
Appendix B. Topic Survey	47
Appendix C. Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile	51
Appendix D. Pre/Post Survey	56
Appendix E. Copyright Permission	59
Appendix F. Whole Language Reading List	60

List of Tables

		Page
Table I:	Percentages of Faculty Turnover and Transfer within the School in the Previous Five Years	4
Table II.	Years of Experience Prior to 1990-1991	5
Table III.	Number of Teachers Pursuing Current Information on Language Arts Instruction Techniques in the Previous Five Years	5
Table IV.	Number of Whole Language Activities Employed in the Classroom	34
Table V.	Summary of TORP Pre and Posttest Responses	38

CHAPTER I

Purpose

Background

The site selected for implementation of this proposal was the sole elementary school located in a rural North Florida district. With only one small town in the county, residents were required to travel 30 to 60 miles for many necessary services, such as medical treatment, shopping and large purchases. The only large employers for county residents were a state prison, a paper mill in a neighboring county, the county government and a small boat plant. The majority of families were engaged in some type of agriculture-related business. Timber, tobacco, and watermelons were the major crops produced by primarily small, family-owned farms.

Due to these economic factors 54 percent of the student population met the criteria for free or reduced lunch, while 10 percent qualified as migrant as a result of the large number of dairy farms in the district. The rural nature of the community also meant that 95 percent of the school's 535 students were bused to school. The racial composition of the student population

was 87 percent Caucasian, 12 percent Black, and one percent Mexican-American.

The classes in this school were housed in self-contained settings, with each grade level grouped around a central pod. Class sizes in the primary grades varied from 19 to 25 students, while classes in the upper grades averaged 28 to 32 students. The staff assembled to serve these classes included one principal, one curriculum specialist, one guidance counselor, one media specialist, three Exceptional Student Education (ESE) teachers (one of which was assigned to gifted students), three Chapter I teachers, two physical education teachers, 24 classroom teachers and four aides assigned to special areas.

The faculty of the school, which comprised 35 members, held 27 Bachelor of Science degrees (19 in Elementary Education, five in Early Childhood, two in Physical Education and one in Social Studies) and eight Master of Science degrees (two in Early Childhood, one in Guidance, one in Mental Retardation, one in Computer Technology, two in Reading, and one in Administration). For the five years prior to this study the faculty had been relatively stable with only slight fluctuation. The

year in question showed a significant increase in the turnover rate, including the position of the principal.

The researcher, as a Kindergarten teacher in the school setting, became increasingly aware that the needs of many children were not being met by current methods of instruction. Several teachers also expressed the opinion that many classroom activities had become repetitive and irrelevant for students. After learning of the trend toward whole language instruction in language arts, the researcher felt this philosophy would meet this need. Realizing that the faculty was not utilizing whole language techniques, it was decided to investigate the situation more closely.

Problem Statement

To explore the possible need for an update of teaching skills in the area of language arts, the history of the faculty was examined through a survey (see Appendix A:46). Several interesting points emerged. The faculty of the school had been relatively stable over the previous five years, but had experienced major changes in the study year. Many teachers who had remained on staff were in new positions this year (see Table I). This

meant one segment of the faculty was well established with respect to school routines, policies, and philosophy, while the remainder (almost half of the population) was new to the environment and had no common frame of reference. Knowledge, shared experiences, and opportunities for joint planning were needed to provide unity and a directed focus.

Table I

Precentages of Faculty Turnover and Transfer within the School for the Previous Five Years

Year	85-86	86-87	87-88	88-89	89-90	90-91
Turnover	0%	7%	11%	11%	16%	29%
Transfer	0%	0%	7%	0%	6%	15%

Another factor which required exploration was the number of years of experience held by each faculty member (see Table II). Sixty-nine percent of the faculty had more than five years teaching experience and 45 percent had been in this school for five years or longer. This information, coupled with the fact that there had been few formal efforts to keep abreast of current language

arts instructional techniques (see Table III), lent validity to the statement that langauge arts was being taught in a traditional manner in this school. A proactive need was indicated to inform the faculty of the emerging trend toward a whole language philosophy in langauge arts instruction.

Table II

Years of Experience

Prior to 1990-91

No. of Yrs.	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	30+
No. of Tchrs.	12	9	4	2	2	1	5

Table III

Number of Teachers Pursuing Current Information on Language Arts Instruction Techniques in the Previous Five Years

Year	85-86	86-87	87-88	88-89	89-90	90-91
College Cr.	0	0	1	1	1	0
Inservice	3	6	3	2	0	6

Through the use of a second survey (see Appendix B:47), it was determined that language arts was an area of great concern for the faculty at large. Questions in the areas of discipline, referral for exceptional student services, whole language and problem solving strategies yielded the greatest positive responses in the area of whole language. Nineteen out of 29 respondents indicated interest in implementing a whole language approach and expressed a desire for further information on the subject. In a rank order of preference for these four topics, whole language was ranked as a first choice by 13 respondents and as a second choice by five respondents, which made it the most desired topic for study. Teachers were also given the option of adding to the list of potential topics. This question yielded only four suggestions and each was posed by only one individual.

In summary, several documented needs emerged. First, current language arts research was needed for those teachers who had experienced little additional training since their degree program. Second, the faculty needed the chance to form a common frame of reference and unified purpose for this new team. Third, the faculty itself perceived a need for instruction in whole language techniques, as indicated through the faculty survey

(Appendix B:47). Staff development, or inservice as it is commonly called, had traditionally been the vehicle for making changes of this nature. A study of various staff development options, as well as effective staff development techniques, were deemed necessary to implement a productive whole language training program. Keeping these considerations in mind, it was decided that the target population for this training would have to be voluntary. Teachers interested in the topic, willing to invest the time and willing to take the risk of cooperative learning were the individuals desired for participation.

Outcome Objectives

Most of the desired and anticipated changes to be initiated by this project were in the affective area. The desired outcome was that teachers' perceptions of the role of the teacher in the learning process, as well as their theoretical orientation toward what information is relevant to students, would be altered as a result of this training. As quoted by Deford (1985:353), Harste and Burke explained orientation as "those deep philosophical principles that guide teachers" when they

are selecting, planning and evaluating student progress in reading. By use of this definition, a change in teacher orientation should result in a change in teacher practices in the classroom. Therefore, the objectives of this proposal were aimed at changing the theoretical orientation of the faculty members volunteering for participation and instituting whole language strategies in their respective classrooms. The third objective was designed to alter teachers' methods of acquiring and refining new skills.

1. At the end of a 12 week period 70 percent of the teachers participating in the staff development program will show a change in their theoretical philosophy about the teaching of reading toward a whole language orientation, as measured by the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (see Appendix C:51).

2. At the end of a 12 week period 60 percent of the teachers participating in the staff development program will show an increase in the use of whole language teaching strategies by incorporating three or more new techniques they have learned from activities during this project.

3. Over the course of a 12 week period the target group of teachers, in the training sessions, will demonstrate a positive attitude toward utilizing the expertise of colleagues in brainstorming, planning whole language strategies and evaluating the effectiveness of activities in their respective classrooms, as indicated on a post survey and observed by the researcher.

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategy

Review of the Literature

After locating the literature on staff development through a computer search, several definitions emerged from the review. According to Shroyer (1990:3), staff development consists of "adoption" of ideas, "implementation" of these ideas and "continuation" of these ideas. Wildman (1987) points out three similar steps of accretion, restructuring and tuning, and states that autonomy (or freedom), collaboration, and time are necessary for these three steps to occur.

This process of learning about new skills, trying them out, and accepting them into practice may be accomplished in several ways. Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989) summarize five basic models of staff development. In the model they term "individually guided staff development," training is based on the needs of the individual. Relying on the theory that teachers will work harder and use more of the knowledge gained if they

choose an area of study, teachers identify an individual need. Activities are then planned to meet this need and, after implementation, the teacher evaluates the effectiveness in meeting the need.

The strategy of observation/assessment incorporates three basic concepts: (1) it is helpful to hear someone else's viewpoint, (2) both the observed and the observer are benefitted, and (3) changes in behavior can be documented over time. Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989) stated that it is best to alternate between observations which have a directed focus and those which are more generalized in order to locate strengths and weaknesses. They also cited Shalaway's statement that 10 to 15 coaching sessions may be necessary to effectively use a new skill in the classroom, while they stated Joyce placed the number of necessary trials as high as 30. Stages in this method include a pre-observation conference, the observation, analysis of the observation, and a post-observation conference. Observations may be classifed by Hunter's method of listing behaviors aiding learning, those hindering learning or those doing neither (time-wasters). Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989) found that peer coaching between teachers improved classroom performance more than a workshop only.

A third method of staff development which Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989) identified is the development/improvement process. In this method teachers realize a need for more information in order to accomplish an immediate task. Once this need is identified through dissatisfaction, brainstorming, a needs assessment, or student achievement, a response action is planned. This process encourages experiential knowledge and broadens the perspective of the teachers participating.

Training, as a staff development method, involves a variety of stages, according to Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989). Group sessions are aimed at changing awareness and imparting new techniques. Through practice this new knowledge is brought under "executive control," which means that the teacher knows when and where to use the new skill appropriately. Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989) cited the steps of theory acquisition, demonstration, simulated practice of a skill, feedback, and coaching as the major processes involved in this method. Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989) found three researchers who cited the importance of peer observation in this method.

The final type of staff development described in the summary is termed "inquiry" (Sparks and Loucks-Horsley, 1989). Inquiry may be equated with an action research model, in which a problem is identified, data is collected in the classroom, data is analyzed, and changes are made based on the findings.

Traditionally, staff development has meant a one-time workshop where teachers are presented new techniques and then left alone to implement them. Leggett and Hoyle (1987) cited reasons why this type of program has not been effective in the past. Lack of self-direction, mandatory participation, no follow-up assistance, no support for implementation at the building level, and topics not related to individual concerns are all given as reasons for non-implementation.

Other researchers also enumerated reasons for a low implementation rate from traditional inservice activities. Due to the isolation of the classroom setting many teachers won't try new skills because they have no standard by which to gauge their performance (they haven't seen many other teachers teach) according to Joyce (in Brandt, 1987:13). Therefore, a climate supportive of risk-taking is necessary (Sparks and Loucks-Horsley, 1989). Shroyer (1990), also lists the

"practicality ethic" as a reason why new skills are not put into practice. Teachers must feel that all the work and effort to acquire a new skill are worth the effort in terms of relevance to their individual situation, manageability, and value to their students. A third factor in non-implementation involves the nature of the learning process for teachers. According to Wildman (1987), curiosity is necessary for professional growth, but the level of uncertainty must be balanced. Too little uncertainty promotes boredom, while too much will result in anxiety and unwillingness to try anything new.

While many reasons for the failure of staff development programs have been documented, there also exists a wealth of knowledge on practices which <u>are</u> effective. Most the the studies have reported similar findings. In the initial stages, the establishment of common goals, through needs assessment surveys and teacher involvement in planning, ensure personal meaning and higher levels of participation on the part of teachers (Hagerty, 1990; Jones, 1990; Shroyer, 1990; Sparks and Loucks-Horsley, 1989). The provision of extrinsic incentives, such as substitutes and release time, and intrinsic incentives, such as improving teacher

knowledge and skills, also enhance the effectiveness of inservice activties (Hagerty, 1990; Jones, 1990; Shroyer, 1990). Serious support from the administration is cited as another important quality in staff development (Hagerty, 1990; Jones, 1990; Sparks and Loucks-Horsley, 1989). This support should include clear goals, strong leadership (Sparks and Loucks-Horsley, 1989) and provision for adequate time, resources and involvement on the part of administrators (Shroyer, 1990). Hagerty (1990) cited appropriate physical arrangements for the training session as an administrative duty.

In the preparation phase of the process, it is important to have adequately trained presenters (Hagerty, 1990; Sparks and Loucks-Horsley, 1989) who have utilized current research and theory on the desired topic (Jones, 1990; Shroyer, 1990; Sparks and Loucks-Horsley, 1989). During the staff development activity it is necessary to make use of adult learning principles by including a variety of techniques in the presentation. These techniques should be used in a manner which is not threatening to the participants (Leggett and Hoyle, 1987; Shroyer, 1990). During the presentation, simulations and/or demonstrations increase the retention rate of the participants (Fox, 1989; Sparks and Loucks-Horsley,

1989). Fox (1989) advocated the use of videos or live modeling of techniques and Hagerty (1990) suggested examples of student work to enhance these demonstrations.

Once the information has been presented it is necessary to practice the new skills for them to be incorporated into the teacher's repertoire (Hagerty, 1990; Leggett and Hoyle, 1987; Sparks and Loucks-Horsley, 1989). This practice allows teachers to develop "invisible" skills, or contingincies, to the "what if" situations that may occur in the classroom (Sparks and Loucks-Horsley, 1989). Numerous studies point out a need for interaction (Sparks and Loucks-Horsley, 1989), or "companionship" as Joyce termed it (in Brandt, 1987:12). Teachers must have time to practice a new skill and discuss it with other teachers in order to make it a part of their repertoire, Ginocchio (1990) has stated. If this process is not allowed the transfer from knowledge of a skill to application of that skill may not occur. In fact, according to Fox (1989), retention three weeks after training may be as low as 15 percent. Fox (1989) stated that a new teaching skill must be practiced at least five times in the two weeks after training to increase retention and application; while, according to

Joyce (in Brandt, 1987:14), 30 trials may be necessary to incorporate the skill easily into one's repertoire.

All of the previous statements point out the need for cooperative activities in staff development programs. Johnson and Johnson (1987) describe three possible relationships among teachers: competitive, where the success of one teacher decreases the chance for success of other teachers; individualistic, where each teacher works for goals independent of anyone else; and cooperative, where teachers work together to achieve joint goals. In a summary of the research from 133 studies conducted since 1897, Johnson and Johnson (1987) have found that cooperation produces higher achievement, interpersonal relations, social support and self-esteem from one-third to one standard deviation above that for individualized or competitive methods.

Several aspects are involved in working cooperatively. Teachers must be willing to engage in collegiality. This implies a willingness to plan, share and offer suggestions for improvement in new activities (Sparks and Loucks-Horsley, 1989). Cooperation also involves a willingness to experiment, or test out, new strategies. This willingness will exist only when the administration supports experimentation (Fox, 1989;

Jones, 1990; Mandeville and Rivers, 1989; Sparks and Loucks-Horsley, 1989). A third aspect of cooperation is supervision. This does not mean supervision in the evaluative sense, but, rather, coaching to improve new skills. This support should continue until the teacher feels independently comfortable with the new skill (Jones, 1990; Sparks and Loucks-Horsley, 1989). It should be an activity for which resources are allocated and planning occurs, not a haphazard one (Leggett and Hoyle, 1987; Sparks and Loucks-Horsley, 1989).

A final aspect of effective staff development involves evaluation of the program. In retrospect, the program should have met some of the visionary goals of the school. Teacher knowledge gained through the activity should help implement the school's mission (Shroyer, 1990; Sparks and Loucks-Horsley, 1989). Hagerty (1990) refers to the importance of "impact evaluation," where success of the program is measured by changes in teaching which result in improved student learning.

Solution Strategy

In looking at traditional staff development practices, Fullan, as quoted by Shroyer (1990:2), so eloquently expressed the thoughts of many teachers when he stated

> ...Nothing has promised so much and has been so frustratingly wasteful as the thousands of workshops and conferences which led to no significant change in practice when the teachers returned to their classrooms.

This statement was confirmed by the results of a survey (Appendix B:47) showing teacher preference for an ongoing program rather than a one-time workshop. When asked on the survey which type of activties in the area of language arts would be most desired for staff development, the faculty expressed definite opinions. Ten people responded positively to sharing sessions within the faculty group; seven preferred a one-time workshop; nine expressed interest in a workshop with a follow-up; and 17 preferred several short workshops spaced throughout the year. Teachers were allowed to select more than one option, and the results indicated overwhelmingly that the faculty wanted some type of ongoing support in their efforts to implement whole language techniques.

From an examination of the staff development options offered by Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1989), as outlined

in the Review of the Literature, it did not seem feasible to expect teachers in this school to choose individually guided staff development or inquiry (an action research model) as a means for obtaining information on current trends in language arts education. The results presented in Table III (page 5), showing the small number of teachers who had pursued independent study through college courses and inservice, supported this conclusion.

The observation/assessment model was also not practical for implementation at this point. Ginocchio (1990), in his description of the Professional Effectiveness Program (PEP) implemented in the Wisconsin Rapids School District, emphasized the importance of training before beginning a peer observation program. Since this training had not occurred in this district, this method of staff development was rejected at this time.

Based on the evidence of several factors, a combination of the development/improvement model and the training model was chosen as the best option for this situation. Shanklin (1989:61) stated

> Joyce and Showers (1980) claim that the usual vehicle of staff development--presentations by experts--results in a five percent implementation rate, while a combination of presentations, demonstrations,

and coaching results in a 95 percent implementation rate.

The findings of Johnson and Johnson (1987), showing cooperation produced the greatest results, coupled with the results of the faculty survey (Appendix B:47), in which teachers requested ongoing support and faculty sharing sessions, also supported a design of this nature. This format allowed teachers to gain new ideas, practice them in the classroom, and refine techniques through discussions with colleagues. A project was planned in which an initial, full-day session with a professional consultant focused on acquisition of new techniques. Subsequent weekly meetings emphasized sharing by teachers. Through sharing experiences from the classroom, offering support, and jointly planning new strategies, all teachers participating had the opportunity to gain new skills. A project designed in this manner, by definition, required voluntary participation in order to be successful.

In conclusion, this once stable faculty, which had recently experienced a large turnover, had been teaching language arts in a traditional manner. In order to update the teaching skills of the most experienced staff members, to unify the new faculty team, and to meet the expressed needs of the faculty, a staff development

project outlining whole language theory was indicated. The staff development model most applicable to this situation involved initial training, weekly reinforcement sessions, practice of new techniques in the classroom and collegial discussions. This initial project was not designed to completely eradicate all the problems outlined, but to form the basis for an ongoing support system to strengthen the faculty in all future endeavors.

CHAPTER III

Method

Since it had been determined to offer ongoing support in this staff development program and the teachers involved were full-time classroom teachers, most of the training sessions occurred at the end of the school day. The initial training by a consultant was a full-day session planned for a regularly scheduled Professional Development Day. After this activity, meetings were set up once a week for no longer than one hour periods. Since 30 minutes of this time was a planning period, teachers were only required to stay 30 minutes beyond the regular day in order to attend. The principal was also very helpful in protecting this time in order to avoid scheduling conflicts with other meetings. Realizing that this was not the time most conducive to learning and/or attendance, refreshments and small door prizes were provided at each session to keep interest up. This technique worked well with eight out of 10 in average attendance.

These weekly sessions included the dissemination of new information, participant sharing of experiences with new techniques employed in the classroom during the previous week, and brainstorming methods for correcting problems encountered with new techniques. A sequence for the study of new information was designated, but this often varied according to the needs expressed during the session. Participants were encouraged each week to try a new technique in the classroom and to pursue some independent reading. The reading materials were available for check-out at each session.

The sessions were held, except the full-day session with the consultant, in a Kindergarten classroom. This setting proved to be very conducive to the project. The teachers felt comfortable in a classroom and they often picked up some item available in the room to help illustrate a point in their discussion. The room was also centrally located in the school, putting no undo effort on anyone to attend.

Weekly Timeline

Week One

This week was used for the dissemination, collection, and tabulation of interest and historical

surveys (Appendices A and B:46 and 47). These surveys were distributed to each faculty member through faculty mailboxes and a candy bar was attached as a thank-you for completing the information. This method proved highly successful, with a 83 percent return rate. Much of the information needed for the Purposes chapter was derived in this manner. This information also determined the topic most desired for study by the faculty. Out of 29 respondents 19 requested information on whole language, and expressed a desire to implement it in the classroom. In a rank order of preference among four topics, whole language was listed as a first choice by 13 teachers and as a second choice by five teachers. This information was an invaluable aid to the researcher.

Week Two

Teachers interested in participating in a whole language study were asked to meet with the researcher after school. Ten teachers responded to the request. A short survey (Appendix D:56) was used to determine whole language activities currently in use by individuals and to measure willingness to rely on other teachers for advice. This survey showed that 50 percent of the participants had some previous exposure to the whole language philosophy. The Theoretical Orientation to

Reading Profile (TORP) (Appendix C:51) was also given (Deford, 1985). This pretest indicated that 50 percent of the group believed most strongly in the whole language philosophy as compared to a phonics or a skills orientation. After these pretest measures, teachers were asked for areas of concern or special interest to determine if the project should be modified. During this meeting individuals were reluctant to express opinions or concerns. As an introductory activity, a review of an article by Lovitt (1990), listing ten false assumptions which classroom teachers must give up in order to implement whole language strategies, was presented.

Week Three

A five-hour session, "Making the Transition to Whole Language Instruction," was presented by a professional consultant, provided through Northeast Florida Educational Consortium based in Palatka, Fla. Permission was obtained from the principal and the consultant to utilize this pre-scheduled day as a part of this project. The consultant was most cooperative in modifying this presentation to meet the needs of the study group. This session was held in a larger room because it was also opened up to faculty members who were not a part of the project group. An overhead projector

was provided for the consultant's use. This activity served as an excellent introduction for topic.

Week Four

A discussion of appropriate whole language activities was begun from a handout provided by the researcher. The group became much more relaxed and began asking questions as the activities were presented. One of the first questions asked was about how much time to provide for each activity in the daily schedule. Though this topic was to be discussed in a later session, the researcher modified the project to cover the activities and daily schedules simultaneously. A handout was provided with several suggested time allotments. A whole language reading list was distributed and a collection of whole language reference materials, available at each session, was previewed. Participants were encouraged to check out these materials and to try some of the new activities presented.

Week Five

A review and sharing session was used to begin the discussion. About half of the session was used for this purpose. Teachers related new techniques they had tried based on information gained from the previous week and

were willing to relate successes as well as failures in implementation. Four participants, who had attended The whole language workshop "Transitions," provided by the Society for Developmental Education, Peterboro, N.H., held in Tallahassee, Fla. in Dec., 1990, shared several ideas they had gained from that meeting. In the remaining time, the group returned to the activities handout from Week Four and completed reviewing it.

Week Six

During the sharing/discussion session one teacher explained a procedure she used in her class the previous week. After her explanation she asked the group what they thought of her approach. In effect she asked, "Do you think I was right or wrong?" This required a great deal of courage to open up to the group that way. The group offered varying opinions and not all agreed with her choice; however, this time was a real turning point for the group. They all seemed to realize that they were there to learn and help each other. The discussions from this point were much more open, animated, and earnest. Whole language writing activities were presented by reviewing a handout. Members of the group felt free to interject contributions and/or questions throughout this discussion.

Week Seven

The topic for this session was the development of curriculum guides which are congruent with whole language philosophy. An example of a whole language-based guide, from the ConVal School District, Peterboro, N.H., was provided for the group to inspect. An animated discussion ensued about the balance required in order to teach skills while building a love of literature and writing in students. For the first time during the project, participants expressed how much they were enjoying the chance to meet and share ideas. One participant asked, "What are we going to discuss when we have completed this topic?" Several others agreed that this format was very helpful and practical.

Week Eight

Alternative evaluation strategies, to be used in place of traditional multiple choice/short answer tests were reviewed. Participants expressed varying viewpoints regarding test-taking stress for students, gaining accurate samples of students' work, time constraints for the teacher, and accountability to the school system and parents.

Week Nine

The original plan for this session was for the consultant used for the Professional Development Day to return to address questions and/or concerns which had arisen since the original presentation, however, a scheduling conflict prohibited this activity. As an alternative the group decided to use the time as an opportunity to share new ideas they had tried based on someone else's suggestion in the group. The activity was very successful. Seven different participants related an activity they had tried and told who had given them the idea. It was a true verification of the appropriateness of this ongoing project. It really left everyone there with the feeling that they had helped someone and gained something at the same time.

Week Ten

The emphasis of this session was originally intended to be developing a daily schedule incorporating the desired whole language activities. Since this had already been done in conjunction with Sessions Four and Five, it was briefly reviewed and the procedure of sharing from Week Nine was continued.

Week Eleven

Methods for organizing teacher preparation of whole language activities and/or units of study was presented. Suggested sources for locating information on unit topics were outlined and the participants shared their own sources with each other.

Week Twelve

Participants were asked to complete the pretest survey (Appendix D:56) a second time to compare the results. The TORP was re-administered and participants were allowed to compare it with the original one to measure personal growth from the project. Participants were asked to comment on the project's effectiveness.

As specific examples have verified, critical thinking skills were an integral part of the weekly format. Discussions were often modified to meet the needs of the group and participants were encouraged to ask questions, state their views and offer ideas. In order to monitor progress of the project the researcher kept a log of events at each session, as well as an attendance register. The attendance was good despite the necessity of the after-school meeting time and the

fact that regularly scheduled meetings were occurring on two other days each week. With ten participants, average attendance for each session was eight. On-site reference materials were checked out on 12 different occasions. This number was low due to the fact that several other time-consuming activities (School Improvement Plan committee and Reading Textbook Selection committee) were occurring simutaneously with this study. The handouts were prepared by the researcher based on information derived from the reading lists given to the participants (see Appendix F:60).

Based on comments made by the participants, the observations of the researcher and the responses on the pre- and post-surveys (see Chapter IV--Results) an ongoing staff development program with peer sharing was a successful choice for this setting. The participating individuals (composed of tenured and new faculty members) became a closely knit and knowledgeable group which can form the basis for disseminating information and peer-sharing techniques to their respective grade-level teams.

CHAPTER IV

Results

At the end of the implementation period the success of the project was evaluated through two measures. The first measure, an informal survey (Appendix D:56), allowed participants to frame their answers in their own words. It was felt that this method would give the best picture of their true feelings. This post-survey was compared against the same document completed during the pretest session. Criteria for success would be met if 60 percent of the participants listed three new whole language activities implemented in the classroom as a result of this program (Outcome Objective Two:8). This objective was met when six of the 10 participants listed three or more new whole language activities they were employing in their classrooms on the post survey (see Table IV).

Table IV

Number of Whole Language Activities

Employed in the Classroom

Student #	Pre-test	Post-test	New Activities pre vs. post*	Met Criteria
1	3	4	2	
2	7	10	4	yes
3	0	6	6	yes
4	7	9	2	
5	0	1	1	
6	3	8	5	yes
7	7	10	7	yes
8	3	5	2	
9	5	6	3	yes
10	5	4	3	yes

*(At a first glance these figures would appear to be in error, however the discrepancy can be explained. Several students listed different items on the posttest as compared to the pretest. The number shown in this column represents the number of new items shown on the posttest when the duplicated items from the pretest were subtracted.)

Success was also gauged by positive reponses to the items dealing with teacher willingness to rely on help from other teachers (Outcome Objective Three:9). On the post-survey, out of 10 participants, eight indicated feeling comfortable asking a colleague for advice and nine said they would ask for help with planning or through observations. After completing this project nine of the 10 teachers indicated that they would like to use the peer coaching/discussion format in the future.

Comments on the survey included the following: "This is a good way to share innovations," "Different ideas make a stronger program," "Peer discussion is more helpful than teacher-based instruction," "This format opens new doors and reduces the fear of trying new things," "This method brings more continuity to the total reading program," and "This is necessary for a unified, professional staff." As documented in Chapter III--Method, the participants also exhibited this positive attitude during the sessions through their willingness to exchange ideas.

A second measure of the success of the project was the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) (Appendix C:51), developed by Deford (1985). Permission to use this evaluation was granted by the author (Appendix E:59). This instrument is designed to measure a teacher's philosophical position with regard to reading instruction. Deford (1985:353) cited Harste and Burke by outlining the various aspects of teaching which are influenced by a teacher's theoretical orientation. These aspects included:

1. the goals that teachers set for the classroom reading program,
2. the behaviors teachers perceive as reflecting "good reading behavior,"
3. the procedures, materials and information teachers use for instructional diagnosis,
4. the weighting teachers give to various pieces of diagnostic information,
5. the materials teachers select and use

for instruction in the program,
6. the environment teachers perceive to be most conducive to reading growth and
7. the criteria teachers use to determine growth in reading.

Thus, by altering a teacher's theoretical orientation, virtually every aspect of the classroom environment is altered. Deford (1985) validated this instrument by three methods. First, when teachers of known orientation completed the TORP, teachers of like orientation responded similarly. As a second validation technique, three professional judges completed the TORP the way they felt a teacher of each orientation would have. The three judges' samples were similar. Last, three observers completed the TORP the way they felt three observed teachers would fill it out. These responses were also very similar. Deford therefore concluded the TORP to be a valid and reliable measure of theoretical orientation. According to Deford (1985:365),

> The most constructive use of an instrument of this nature is to help researchers and teachers alike examine the assumptions they hold, make their research and instruction as consistent and effective as possible, and develop comprehensive models of reading and instruction based upon clearly defined theoretical positions.

After completing this evaluation tool teachers will be more conscious of the choices made in the classroom and the reasons behind the choice. A change in philosophical

responses from the pretest to the posttest toward a whole language approach would indicate a corresponding change in classroom practice.

This instrument measures how strongly a teacher agrees with a phonics approach, a skills approach or a whole language approach to the teaching of language arts. Beliefs are registered on a Likert scale where one indicates the strongest agreement and five the least agreement. Therefore, the smaller the total score in any area, the stronger the agreement with that philosophy. A teacher may be in agreement with any one or all three of these approaches, but generally they are on a continuum where phonics and whole language are at extreme ends and the skills approach is in the middle. To satisfy Outcome Objective One (p. 8), 70 percent will show a change toward a whole language approach, teachers would need to show an <u>increase</u> from the pretest to the posttest in phonics and/or skills (less belief in these philosophies) or a <u>decrease</u> in the whole language score (indicating stronger agreement). After tabulating the pre- and posttest scores this objective was also satisfied (see Table V) with 80 percent showing stronger agreement with the whole language philosophy, 40 percent showing the desired change in all three areas, and 50

percent showing the desired change in two of the three areas.

Table V

Summary of TORP Pre and Posttest Responses

Student No.		Phonics	Skills	Whole Language
1	pre	29	24	22
	post	27	26*	23
2	pre	42	34	12
	post	45*	35*	9*
3	pre	33	24	19
	post	39*	31*	12*
4	pre	42	42	20
	post	46*	37	8*
5	pre	25	23	24
	post	25	24*	22*
6	pre	32	33	18
	post	39*	35*	13*
7	pre	37	35	16
	post	39*	33	13*
8	pre	30	25	24
	post	32*	25	23*
9	pre	24	24	20
	post	35*	34*	14*
10	pre	30	29	18
	post	35*	37*	24

*(Indicates a change in the desired direction--less agreement with phonics or skills approach or stronger agreement with whole language approach.)

Since all three objectives were satisfied, it would be a valid statement to say that the choice of a combination of the development/improvement model and the training model for staff development in this setting was a good one. A change was effected in the language arts philosophy, the group became more unified, and the participants indicated a willingness to use this method in the future.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

In reviewing the effectiveness of this project, it was indicated in Chapter IV--Results that the outcome objectives were met and the program considered a success. The classroom setting and the use of a teacher as the facilitator were two strong points in the success of the project. The teacher participants felt at ease and free from judgment in this setting. The use of refreshments and door prizes also put the situation on a friendly, relaxed basis. From information provided on the post-survey five of the 10 teachers liked the weekly sessions, while three would have preferred monthly meetings and two suggested meeting once every two weeks.

Looking back, however, there are some modifications which would enhance its effectiveness if it were to be used in the future at this site, or in a similar situation. The time of day was not the one most conducive to the success of the project. If release time, a shortened student day or the use of joint planning could be used to make this program available

during the regular day, it would be a great advantage to the participants. Also a drawback in this case was the fact that there were two other ongoing programs meeting weekly which involved members of this group. These added responsibilities left little time for outside reading, which was an important part of this project. This concern was listed on the post-survey as a shortcoming of this program. Planning a program of this nature at a time when other additional responsibilities would not be necessary or excusing participants from extra duties (committees, etc.) would allow more time for related reading outside the designated sessions. A method for allowing teachers time to observe each other in the classroom would also be a helpful added component.

Future implications of this project can take several forms. First, the knowledge of whole language techniques may be spread by the participants of the program to other faculty members who did not participate. By serving as a core group, the participants can disseminate the information through the entire faculty in an informal way. If interest warrants it, the project could be formally repeated for those who did not participate originally.

Second, the support and wealth of information available through the technique of peer sharing between teachers may lead to further reliance on this strategy. By utilizing the expertise of colleagues, the participants would increase personal effectiveness on the job. This openness and free exchange of ideas could revolutionize teaching techniques for this faculty. Future staff development activities on the subject of peer coaching for teachers may be desired.

As a final follow-up, the research on effective inservice will be shared with the district coordinator for staff development activities. This information, coupled with information on the effectiveness of this project, can provide valuable insight for planning future inservice programs to meet the specific needs of this faculty. Some potential topics listed on the post-survey which were desired by this group were: cooperative learning (five requests); discipline strategies (four requests); mainstreaming Exceptional Students (1 request) and extensions of the whole language study including journal writing, mini-lessons, story-mapping, creating units and sustained silent reading (seven requests).

By incorporating the successful aspects of this project with the suggested modifications indicated

previously, a design for future staff development programs may be achieved which can best meet the needs of teachers as they endeavor to refine and enlarge their repertoire of skills.

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Appendix A

Historical Survey

Faculty Survey

1. NAME_____

2. POSITION_____

3. DEGREE (level and area)_____

4. Number of years' experience (prior to this year)_____

5. Have you received any college credit in the area of language arts since attaining your degree?_____
If so please list the course and the date taken:

_____

_____

_____

6. Since attaining your degree have you participated in any language arts inservice?_____
If so, please list the specific subject of the inservice and the year you attended. (approximate times are fine)

_____

_____

_____

7. Do you read professional journals?_____
If so, please estimate how often you read an article related to language arts.

weekly monthly quarterly semi-annually

Appendix B

Topic survey

Grade level or special area_____

DISCIPLINE

1. Discipline in our school is a concern for me.
   yes no

2. Discipline in my classroom is a concern for me.

   yes no

3. I would like to see less use of corporal punishment.

   yes no

4. I used corporal punishment _____ times last year.

   0 1-5 5-10 10+

5. I feel that corporal punishment should remain an option for discipline in the public school.

   yes no

6. I use alternatives to corporal punishment.

   yes no

7. Check the discipline methods you use and estimate the percentage of time you use them.

_____Corporal punishment	_____%
_____Immediate Rewards	_____%
_____Delayed Rewards	_____%
_____Time Out	_____%
_____Referral to principal	_____%
_____Peer pressure	_____%
_____Group rule setting	_____%
_____Group problem solving	_____%
_____Parent conferences	_____%
_____Student conferences	_____%
	100 %

8. I would like some information on discipline alternatives.

yes no

EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT SERVICES
(Speiclfc Learning Disabilities, Educably Mentally Handicapped, Emotionally Handicapped, Gifted)

1. I am sometimes uncertain about when to refer a student for ESE testing.

yes no

2. I was unsure about referring _____ students last year for ESE testing.

yes no

3. I would like more information on characteristics which will help me recognize possible ESE students.

yes no

4. I would like more information on techniques for behavior modification of ESE students in the regular classroom (either before placement or when mainstreamed).

yes no

5. I would like more information on appropriate teaching techniques for ESE students in the regular classroom.

yes no

6. I am familiar with the process to follow when referring students for ESE testing.

yes no

7. I feel the referral process in too involved.

yes no

8. I sometimes do not refer a student I am unsure about because the process is too involved.

yes no

WHOLE LANGUAGE

1. I am familiar with the whole language concept.
yes no

2. I am vaguely aware of the whole language concept, but do not know specifically what it is.

yes no

3. I am interested in using a whole language approach in my classroom.

yes no

4. I need more information in order to implement whole language techniques in my classroom.

yes no

5. I am currently using a whole language concept in my classroom

a.	exclusively.	yes	no
b.	to a large degree.	yes	no
c.	to a small degree.	yes	no
d.	not at all.	yes	no
e.	not sure.	yes	no

6. I would like to use a whole language concept

a.	in conjunction with the basal.	yes	no
b.	in place of the basal series.	yes	no

7. I have some whole language activities I would like to share.

yes no

8. I would be interested in gaining more information on whole langauge by
   a. sharing with our faculty. yes no
   b. a one time workshop. yes no
   c. a worshop with follow-up. yes no
   d. several short workshops spaced through-out the year. yes no

PROBLEM SOLVING

1. I am currently using problem solving techniques in my classroom.

   yes no

2. I would like to implement problem solving techniques in my classroom.

   yes no

3. I would be interested in learning more about problem solving.

   yes no

4. I would be interested in learning more about problem solving techniques by
   a. sharing with our faculty. yes no
   b. a one time workshop. yes no
   c. a workshop with follow-up. yes no
   d. several short workshops spaced throughout the year. yes no

SUMMARY

1. Please rank (1-4) your order of preference in addressing these topics.

   _____Discipline
   _____ESE Referral and management
   _____Whole language
   _____Problem solving

2. Please list any other areas which you feel need to be addressed.

Appendix C

The DeFord Theoretical Orientation To Reading Profile (TORP)

Name:_____

Directions: Read the following statements, and circle one of the responses that will indicate the relationship of the statement to your feelings about reading and reading instruction. (select one best answer that reflects the strength of agreement or disagreement)

		SA				SD
1.	A child needs to be able to verbalize the rules of phonics in order to assure proficiency in processing new words.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	An increase in reading errors is usually related to a decrease in comprehension.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Dividing words in syllables according to rules is a helpful instructional practice for reading new words.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Fluency and expression are necessary components of reading that indicate good comprehension.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Materials for early reading should be written in natural language without concern for short, simple words and sentences.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	When children do not know a word, they should be instructed to sound out its parts.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	It is a good practice to allow children to edit what is written into their own dialect when learning to read.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	The use of a glossary or dictionary is necessary in determining the meaning and pronunciation of new words.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Reversals (e.g. saying "saw" for "was") are significant problems in the teaching of reading.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	It is a good practice to correct a child as soon as an oral reading mistake is made.	1	2	3	4	5

11. It is important for a word to be repeated a number of times after it has been introduced to insure that it will become a part of sight vocabulary. 1 2 3 4 5

12. Paying close attention to punctuation marks is necessary to understanding story content. 1 2 3 4 5

13. It is a sign of an ineffective reader when words and phrases are repeated. 1 2 3 4 5

14. Being able to label words according to grammatical function (nouns, etc.) is useful in proficient reading. 1 2 3 4 5

15. When coming to a word that's unknown, the reader should be encouraged to guess upon meaning and go on. 1 2 3 4 5

16. Young readers need to be introduced to the root form of words (fun, long) before they are asked to read inflected forms (running, longest). 1 2 3 4 5

17. It is not necessary for a child to know the letters of the alphabet in order to learn to read. 1 2 3 4 5

18. Flashcard drills with sightwords in an unnecessary form of practice in reading instruction. 1 2 3 4 5

19. Ability to use accent patterns in multisyllable words (pho'to graph, pho to' gra phy, and pho to gra' phic) should be developed as part of reading instruction. 1 2 3 4 5

20. Controlling text through consistent spelling patterns (The fat cat ran back. The fat cat sat on a hat) is a means by which children can best learn to read. 1 2 3 4 5

21. Formal instruction in reading is necessary to insure the adequate development of all the skills used reading. 1 2 3 4 5

22. Phonic analysis is the most important form of analysis used when meeting new words. 1 2 3 4 5

23. Children's initial encounters with print should focus on meaning, not upon exact graphic representation. 1 2 3 4 5

24. Word shapes (word configuration) should be taught in reading to aid in word recognition. 1 2 3 4 5

25. It is important to teach skills in relation to other skills. 1 2 3 4 5

26. If a child says "house" for the written word "home", the response should be left uncorrected. 1 2 3 4 5

27. It is not necessary to introduce new words before they appear in the reading text. 1 2 3 4 5

28. Some problems in reading are caused by readers dropping the inflectional endings from words (e.g. jumps, jumped). 1 2 3 4 5

Response Items--TORP

A positive response to the following items indicates a PHONICS orientation:

Item	Content
1.	Verbalize rules
2.	Increase in errors/Less comprehension
3.	Syllabication
6.	Instruction to sound out
9.	Problem of reversals
10.	Correct miscues
12.	Attend to punctuation
20.	Control text
21.	Formal instruction
22.	Importance of phonics

A positive response to the following items indicates a SKILLS orientation:

Item	Content
4.	Fluency = comprehension
8.	Must use glossary
11.	Repeat sight words
13.	Inefficient to repeat
14.	Label grammar
16.	Roots then inflected forms
19.	Teach accent patterns
24.	Teach word shapes
25.	Importance of skills
28.	Problems with endings

A positive response to the following items indicates a WHOLE LANGUAGE orientation:

Item	Content
5.	Natural materials
7.	Read in dialect
15.	Guess and go on

17. Alphabet unnecessary
18. Flashcards unnecessary
23. Initial focus on meaning
26. Do not correct "house" for "home"
27. No words introduced

Appendix D

Pre/Post Survey

1. Please list the whole language activities which you are currently using in your classroom.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Do you feel comfortable asking a colleague for advice on how to implement a program in your classroom?_____

Comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Would you ask a colleague to help you with planning and through observations?_____

   Comments:_____

   _____

   _____

4. How many times have you asked a colleague for help?

   _____

   _____

These items are to be completed for the Post Survey only:

5. From your experiences with this staff development program, do you plan to use peer coaching/discussion in the future? Why or why not?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

6. Would you be interested in setting up future study groups on topics of interest?_____

7. If yes, how often should the group meet?

   _____weekly _____monthly _____other:_____

8. If yes, what topics would you be interested in pursuing?_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. A. What did you like best about the format of this program?_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

B. What did you like least about the format of this progam?_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix E

Copyright Permission

October 30, 1990

Tina Hurst
Rt.1, Box 630
Mayo, Fl. 32066

Dear Ms. Hurst,

You have my permision to use the DeFord Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) in your research.

Sincerely,

Diane DeFord

Diane DeFord

Whole Language Reading List

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Debbie Manning
4848 N. Fruit
Fresno, CA 93705

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Richard C. Owen, Pub.
P. O. Box 819
Rockefeller Center Station
New York, NY 10185
($15.00 per year)

The Whole Lanugage Teachers Association Newsletter
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Sudbury, MA 01776
($12.00 per year)

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October 31, 1990

ATTENTION TEACHERS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The Library Media Center has received, From Start-Up to Evaluation: A Whole Language Mini-Library.

Transitions--Regie Routman

Mathematics in Progress--Ann and Johnny Baker

Reading, Writing and Caring--Whole Language Consultants, Ltd.

The Whole Lanaguage Evaluation Book--Kenneth S. Goodman

What's Whole in Whole Language?--Ken Goodman